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ABSTRACT

Since conflict may concern goals, roles, or individuals, it is endemic to the decision making process and is particularly evident at the stage of formulating and weighing alternatives. The entire social system of the school may be drawn into or affected by the conflict. If these patterns are free to run their course, the school could quickly enter a state of complete disruption. Fortunately, there are interventions that can affect the course of the conflict and prevent its development into a totally disruptive event. A short annotated bibliography is provided. (Author/WM)

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UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF CONFLICT: A NEGLECTED DIMENSION IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

by

Roland E. Barnes

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"A conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur . . . An action which is incompatible with another action prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures, or in some way makes the other action less likely or less effective.

A conflict may arise from differences in information or belief . . . A conflict may reflect differences in interests, desires or values . . . A conflict may occur as a result of scarcity of resources such as money, time, space, position . . . A conflict may also reflect a rivalry in which one person tries to outdo or undo the other."

— *Morton Deutsch, "Toward An Understanding of Conflict," 1971*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Rarely is any intensive attention given to understanding the nature of conflict in training programs for educational administrators. This is unfortunate, especially in a field which claims to utilize pertinent social science concepts in training personnel. It is all the more unfortunate when it is realized that educational administrators must deal with conflict in most situations in which they make decisions. Lipham, 1973, says:

> The designation that alternatives are in competition connotes that in most situations the decision maker is faced with conflict – either potential or actual, either latent or manifest. Since such conflict may concern goals, roles or individuals, it is endemic to the decision-making process and is particularly evident at the stage of formulating and weighing alternatives. Hence, it is often useful to conceive of decision making as a conflict resolution process.

Furthermore, the administrator most often has to cope with still more conflict as the selected alternative is implemented. The consequence of implementation can often spawn conflict.

It seems imperative, then, that educational administrators should be knowledgeable about that phenomenon with which they must cope daily. Being knowledgeable means much more than having mere cognition of concepts about conflict; it means that administrators should, through preservice training, be exposed to a variety of conflict situations in which they experience the intense emotions involved while they attempt the resolution or amelioration of a particular situation. In training programs such exposure can be experienced in simulated or role play situations which may be examined immediately following enactment, with appropriate feedback to the individual.

This booklet, however, will not treat exposure of administrators to conflict situations. Rather, the main purpose of this publication is to present a knowledge base about the nature of conflict. A major reason for focusing on a knowledge base is that, most often, school system personnel tend to deal with conflict situations as if the phenomenon were novel and unique, as if conflict had never occurred anywhere before (Coleman, 1957, p.3). But in many cases, similar conflict situations had taken place recently in a neighboring school system. Nonetheless, the usual approach to such occurrences is one of trial and error, rather than an attempt to examine the cumulative experience of other school systems that have already dealt with similar situations.

From extensive reading in psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science, I have culled and organized

pertinent theories and concepts about the nature of conflict. These are presented here in brief or summary form. A forthcoming book will contain complete articles or theoretical formulations in specific areas.

School system personnel have in this digest information that can help ensure that their school systems will be better able to view conflict situations from a sound base of knowledge, from which there can be significant implications for positively dealing with conflicts. In these times of accelerated change, tension and turbulence, school administrators must become emotionally and intellectually capable of handling conflict (Schneider, 1973, p. 4).

This booklet, then, will treat several significant aspects of knowledge about the nature of conflict, and some implications for educational administrators.

The Inevitability of Conflict

In the basic nature of human beings there is some quantity of aggression; man becomes aggressive when he is frustrated from attaining some goal (McNeil, p. 27). If you have observed two or more young children playing in a sandbox you have certainly seen the appearance of aggression. If you have witnessed adults in almost any political campaign you have seen the appearance of aggression in a more sophisticated form.

Since in the social processes of man there is incessant interaction of persons, the interests of some are bound to conflict with the interests of others, resulting in hostilities among some of the members. If there were no social interaction there would be no conflicts. Because persons do find it necessary to interact, to become involved, there will be disagreements, controversies, and conflicts in areas of life that are important to members of a community. Hence, conflicts are inherent in the social structures which exist in any community.

The probability of conflict increases greatly during times when drastic changes in the social structures occur. Since World War II, the social structures of the United States have been changing. Many segments of the population that had been denied equal opportunity have begun to gain some access to that which was taken for granted by the majority of the population. This has initiated behaviors, facilities, and practices different from those which formerly existed in the social structure. Significant or drastic changes in the social structure tend to increase aggression in a society.

The values, attitudes, feelings, and self-interests of persons in the society permeate both their primary and secondary social units. Families, including children and youth, tend to have similar values, attitudes, feelings, and self-interests. It follows that the conditions for hostility between persons also exist in the school setting, among children and youth who come together on the school site. Therefore, it should be clear that children and youth are not excepted from the inevitability of conflict, in or out of school.

The notion of the inevitability of conflict carries with it a corollary: that social conflict has positive functions in a society (Coser, 1956; Deutsch, 1969). This view of conflict is discussed in the next section.

A Positive View of Social Conflict

Man has talked of or written about conflict during all of his history. Much has been written about international conflict and class conflict. Sociology is the field in which most attention is given to the study of conflict between two parties within a social system. The first sociologist to consider conflict as a separate subject was Georg Simmel (1858-1918). This theoretical concern with conflict was continued and it flourished, especially at the University of Chicago, through about 1920.

During the Twenties and the Thirties, the major approach changed from a theoretical to an empirical focus on conflict. Because every imaginable segment was studied, rarely was the focus on the processes of conflict in such a manner that broad conceptualization might be derived (McNeil, p. 103).

A major influence just after World War II was a view of society as being integrated into an ongoing system based on some value consensus. The idea of consensus, common values acceptable to all, the "melting pot" concept, tended to shift concern from the study of conflict. The attention tended to focus on social statics rather than upon dynamics. The major intent was to ascertain ways of insuring the smooth functioning and maintenance of existing social and organizational structures. Negative connotations were applied to discontent and tension which interfered with consensus. Individuals were expected to adjust to given structures and were seen as malfunctioning psychologically if problems arose. There was a bias toward stability, harmony, and integration of structures or institutions, and conflict was avoided rather than allowed to come to the fore. All this led to a view of conflict as primarily disruptive, negative, dissociating, and dysfunctional, and as a disease (McNeil, p. 104).

In the years following World War II, however, events and emerging forces caused a re-examination of the prevailing view of society and its conflicts. The major elements of new assumptions were that society does undergo changes, that it is made up of diverse and explosive sets of elements, each contributing to change through coercion. The value of social conflict is that it produces change, thereby keeping the social system viable (Coser, p. 37). It was recognized that interest groups form and pursue their goals through an agreed-upon set of rules, as well as through rules set by the society in which the conflict is taking place.

As early as 1918 and 1924 Mary P. Follett recognized the existence of divisive interests in the community and suggested ways of trying to bring the common interest into dominance. She termed this "integration."

Thirty years later James S. Coleman in his **Community Conflict** generalized from specific conflicts that he studied. He examined the dynamics of controversy and conflict as it evolved and was resolved, ameliorated, or continued over long periods.

> Currently, the prevailing view of society relative to conflict and controversy seems to be that divergent interests do exist in society, and that members of society feel strongly enough about some areas of life to join with others to pursue those interests; that interests of some groups will conflict with interests of others and that such conflicts should not be stifled; and that the knowledge and experience available about the dynamics of conflict and controversy should be utilized to accommodate and integrate differences to achieve a more inclusive structure.

Summarized, this and the previous sections emphasize and underscore two prime requisites for beginning to understand the nature of conflict: (1) conflict is inevitable in human interaction because of the nature of man; and (2) conflict should be viewed as having positive, constructive functions in our social system.

The Complex Nature of Social Conflict

There is overwhelming evidence that conflict is not simply the result of misunderstanding. Conflict is a complex social phenomenon embracing a complicated set of social-psychological (Deutsch, 1971), sociological, and political elements. Individuals in a conflict possess attitudes, values, and desires which may diverge from those of their adversaries. Group identification tends to strengthen the attitudes, values, and desires of individual members regarding the opposing group. Conflict occurs in a social environment of norms and values of many interacting subsystems. Some of these subsystems may have an active interest in the outcome. Conflict may revitalize, modify, or create norms in balancing relative power in the social system.

School administrators must approach the study of conflict in the realization that there are few, if any, simple and easy ways of coping with this phenomenon. To begin to understand the complex nature of conflict requires intensive study in the social sciences, the acceptance of concepts which may well be different from long-held values and beliefs, and the practice of observing the behavior of groups in conflict to analyze the dynamics at work.

The following sections will detail some key concepts and theories necessary for beginning to understand this phenomenon.

CHAPTER II

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THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

In the main, this booklet deals with conflicts in schools, particularly conflicts between two groups within the school or between a group or groups and the school administration. An example of the former type is conflict between two opposing groups of students about how cheer leaders shall be elected. The latter type is illustrated by a situation where black students demand the hiring of more black staff, the initiation of black studies courses and the investigation of racism on the part of two teachers.

The dynamics of both types of conflict are quite similar. They will be described in the following two sections, "The Setting and Initiation," and "Patterns of Development."

The Setting and Initiation of Conflict

A. Community Involvement

During the past decade several events and issues seem to have sparked renewed and active interest in the local community. Some of these events have been national in scope, while generating much action on the local level in both the large cities and the suburbs. The civil rights movement and the Vietnam war are the foremost examples. Individuals and groups felt strongly enough about these two issues to become actively involved in pursuing the outcomes they desired. Other national events or issues that resulted in much local action included school desegregation, rising taxes, consumer protection, equal opportunity, quality education, and the environment. Activity and involvement centered on national events and issues also seem to have generated increasing activity and involvement related to purely local events and issues. There is hardly a community in the United States where many interest groups and individuals are not hard at work seeking change in one form or another. The name of the game seems to be activism to a degree unprecendented in our history.

Increased community involvement produces more controversy. This should not be viewed as undersirable, because disagreement and controversy may be a sure indicator of vitality, especially if that community develops or has developed processes for handling conflict and controversy in ways that bring about constructive rather than destructive results.

Increased community involvement encompasses every area of life, especially education, economics, and taxes. It should not be surprising that increased involvement and activity occur in and around the school setting. Nor should it be a surprise that students also display increasing activism. They, too, are members of the broader community where activism and involvement are common and normal in the current life style.

Nor should it be unexpected that many events and issues in the larger community also become reasons for action and involvement in the school setting. School administrators surely realize that some events and issues in the school also become foci for action and involvement out in the larger community.

It can be implied that the notion of increased community involvement means that in the school setting there will be increasing numbers of controversies and conflicts as persons pursue their divergent interests and goals.

B. Events and Incidents Which Lead to Controversy

Coleman (1957, p. 4) identifies three criteria for events and incidents that lead to dispute: (1) the event must touch upon an important aspect of the community members' lives; (2) the event must affect the lives of different community members differently; and (3) the event must be one on which the community members feel that action can be taken — not one which leaves the community helpless. Education of children, means of livelihood, and taxes are examples of important aspects of community members' lives. Different areas of life are important to different people and at different times. An example of affecting different community members differently is a tax proposal that affects property owners one way and non-property owners another.

These criteria cover a legion of local events which may produce conflict and controversy in the school setting. In addition to local events, there are external problems which may be conflict-producing in a particular community. Community conflicts are now more often related to national affairs than they once were. Note, for example, the numerous communities engaged in conflict over desegregation and busing, financing of schools, or rights of students.

School conflicts seem to arise mainly in two areas of life to which community members tend to respond quickly and with intense interest. The first of these areas is that of **power and authority.** Conflict is generated when some groups feel authority is being used to their disadvantage or is being misused; or, some groups feel they are powerless or that a decision by a body in authority reduces the power they currently possess.

The second area of life affected is that of **cultural values and beliefs.** In any community, various groups have divergent values and philosophies about the purposes of education — what shall be taught and how it shall be taught — as well as what shall be the behavior of students in school and what shall be the particular values stressed in school. Beliefs and values regarding the role of religion in both public and private schools are also diverse and conflicting.

Besides these two areas of life there is a third basis on which people respond. In this instance, the response is not from attitudes toward an incident, event, or policy; it springs from attitudes toward particular persons or groups in the community — from existing antagonisms between individuals, between ethnic groups or between other groups, which leads people to take sides quickly; to say, "I'm against

it because he's for it" (Coleman, p. 6). Many conflicts are in fact a result of the existing hostility between two groups in the community.

C. General Patterns In The Initiation of Controversy

When Coleman wrote his monograph **Community Conflict**, at least half the incidents of conflict he analyzed related to the existence of a national climate of fear and suspicion of internal subversion. A few extreme activists in each community who were ideologically committed to a "cause" gained support for their efforts.

During the mid-1970s anxiety related to internal subversion is not nearly as prevalent. Therefore, I will attempt to theorize about general patterns in the initiation of controversy based on an analysis of incidents of school conflict observed or reported in every section of the country. These, I feel, are particularly worthy of consideration by school administrators.

Some school conflicts are initiated in response to policies or changes promulgated by the school administration. However, the greater number of school conflicts are not responses to actions of school administrators. They arise where groups or individuals conflict in the school, or where groups or individuals bring problems or cases to the school administration for settlement. This section focuses on the latter types. I posit that certain elements in combination cause a conflict to be either resolved or prevented from escalating as, or very soon after, it begins.

At this point, it is appropriate to reiterate that individuals feel strongly enough about some areas of life to act on their feelings. Their perceptions about those areas of life are very important to them. With this realization, let's proceed to examine the dynamics of an incipient conflict.

An individual, or a small group, feels strongly enough about an issue or a problem to voice that feeling to the perceived adversary or to the school administration. This contact appears crucial in determining whether the conflict will be settled, at least tentatively, or whether it will be escalated. If individuals or groups voicing dissatisfaction or discontent receive what they consider positive feedback, the conflict can be settled in this initial stage. Examples of positive feedback include: (1) opportunities to express concerns; (2) promises to investigate claims in a reasonable amount of time; and (3) indications that expression of feelings about which there is deep concern is legitimate.

Factors which may influence positive feedback on the part of the initiating individual or group are: (1) accessability of the person or group to be communicated with — are they easily available? (2) reception of the initiators — is it friendly or neutral? (3) acceptance of claims or feelings — are they accepted as given, with regard for underlying deep concern (whether such concern is justified or not)? (4) credibility of the person or group being spoken to — is some promise or agreement made to report on the claims as soon as they can be checked, or is action promised quickly if claims seem to be immediately justified? Obviously, the antitheses of these four factors will provoke negative feedback on

the part of the initiators. The result of negative feedback will cause the initiators to escalate and enlarge the conflict. Any one or combination of these antithetical factors will result in negative influence: (1) accessability — is it difficult or impossible to reach persons in authority to communicate feelings? (2) reception — is the reception condescending or hostile? (3) acceptability — are claims and feelings derided or challenged immediately? (4) credibility — are claims and feelings dismissed arbitrarily and the individual or group threatened or reprimanded?

These four factors of positive feedback provide significant clues for school administrators. They indicate means whereby administrators may prevent many school conflicts from developing beyond the incipient stage. If administrators are able to proceed in a manner that produces positive feedback on the part of individuals or groups who contact them (regardless of their personal feelings about the individual or group), the incidence of full-blown conflict will drop significantly.

However, there will still be cases of escalated conflict which may or may not result from the action or ineptitude of the school administrator. The dynamics of conflict as it passes beyond the incipient stage is the focus of the following section.

Escalation Patterns in School Conflict

Most of the generalizations in this section are derived from the chapter, "The Dynamics of Controversy" in Coleman's monograph **Community Conflict.** Coleman was impressed by the fact that the development and growth of community controversies is similar despite diverse underlying sources and different kinds of precipitating incidents. Further, once conflicts have begun, there is a remarkable similarity among them.

Coleman cautions that there is no suggestion that nothing can be done about community controversy once it begins. To the contrary, he indicates that the dynamics of controversy can be interrupted and diverted either by conscious action or by existing conditions in the community. This is extremely important for school administrators to consider as they read and ponder the dynamics described below.

A few generalizations in this section are taken from a dissertation by Flannick (1973), who analyzed race-related conflict situations in a large city school system. He identified patterns of development in situations that are similar in many respects to the dynamics described by Coleman.

A preview of the patterns in the development of controversy may be stated in this way: Once a conflict has started, the issues tend to become generalized and new and different issues arise; disagreement shifts to hostility; groups form to take sides and support partisans in the conflict; more extreme leadership comes to the fore; social relations polarize, traditional groups become involved or are immobilized because of internal splits; and word-of-mouth communication replaces the more formal media.

A. Changes In Issues

Three basic transformations take place as the controversy develops:

1. Specific to general: specific issues upon which the controversy was based give way to general ones. This is especially true when there are deep cleavages or long-existing hostility between two groups in the community. In numerous school conflict situations the initial specific issue of one student striking another quickly progresses to the general issue of hostility and threats between whites and blacks.

2. New and different issues: another change in issues frequently is the emergence of quite new and different issues unrelated to the original ones. In the case of the conflict between two students mentioned above, such different issues might emerge as the lack of black teachers and administrators, or that "blacks are getting everything at this school."

3. Disagreement to antagonism: a third change in the nature of issues is the shift from disagreement to antagonism. In this change, the disputants transfer their anger over the issue to the opposing person. Hostility is directed personally. In the case of the two students mentioned earlier, antagonism may be expressed by claiming one dates interracially; the other may claim his adversary uses drugs.

B. Changes in the Social Groups in the School

While issues are changing, or shortly thereafter, social groups in the school are also changing as the conflict develops. If there are witnesses to the precipitating incident and the talk that ensued, they take sides immediately. They quickly communicate with others they know will agree. Formal and informal meetings take place in and out of school to discuss the incident and what should be done about it. If there were no witnesses, the disputants quickly communicate to friends what occurred. The formation of partisan groups begins. The following changes occur:

1. Polarization of social relations: associations within partisan groups grow vigorously but decline and terminate between persons on opposing sides. Individuals cannot be neutral — they must be for or against.

2. Formation of partisan ad hoc groups: partisan groups form to carry out functions important to win the battle. They serve as communication centers and as centers for organizing and planning meetings and other activities.

3. The emergence of new leaders: as partisan groups form, persons who have not been leaders in the past often emerge; new leaders tend to take over the dispute. The new leaders are seldom moderates because the situation calls for extremists.

4. Pressures on formal groups in the school: as the conflict develops, the school's formal organizations are pressured to take sides. At

the same time there are strong pressures within the formal groups to remain neutral because their membership contains persons on both sides of the conflict. Leaders of formal groups are thereby constrained to remain neutral in the situation. It is rare in school conflict situations that more than a small proportion of students form partisan ad hoc groups to pursue a conflict situation. However, the small number of active students bring to bear tremendous pressures on existing formal groups and their leaders.

5. The increasing use of word-of-mouth communication: as the controversy proceeds, the conventional communications media become less and less able to tell people as much as they want to know about the conflict. Word-of-mouth communication gradually fills the gaps, both in volume and in content. Usually there is much distortion in the news communicated, and there is little restraint against slander and personal charges.

6. Use of groups outside of school: the use of groups outside of school was not mentioned by Coleman in his monograph. In Flannick's work the use of outside groups or individuals occurred in each case of conflict he analyzed. In or near the school, groups of non-students voiced encouragement to others, incited others to violence, or provided weapons for the use of others. On the other hand, some community groups and leaders entered the school to attempt to reduce hostility between groups and to assist in planning ways of reducing or resolving the conflict.

In summary, the patterns in school conflict situations seem to cause both the issues and the participants involved to spread and to expand to include both other issues and other participants. The entire social system of the school may be drawn into or affected by the conflict. Word-of-mouth communication usually supercedes other forms of communication. Groups outside of the school frequently become involved in the situation.

If these patterns are free to run their course, the school could quickly enter a complete state of disruption. Fortunately, there are interventions that can affect the course of the conflict and prevent its development into a totally disruptive event. Some considerations leading to determination of effective interventions by administrators are presented in the following section.

CHAPTER III

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IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The introduction to this booklet stated that educational administrators must deal with conflict in most situations in which they make decisions. It was posited that administrators should be knowledgeable about the phenomenon of conflict with which they must cope constantly.

A beginning knowledge base for a start in understanding the nature of conflict has been set down here. In some respects it is meager. However, it is sufficient for any educational administrator to begin to deal with conflict situations in other than a trial and error manner. From the knowledge base presented here the administrator can benefit from the wisdom that has accumulated from the study of conflict. Likewise, the administrator can use this knowledge base to examine it for implications as to how she/he may more effectively cope with conflict situations. Several such implications are set forth below. Many others can be drawn from a reexamination of what has been presented about the nature of conflict.

For the administrator who wishes to get maximum learning and value from this booklet, the following implications provide a firm basis for more effectively coping with conflict. The administrator who is able in the management of conflict:

A. has a mind set or view that conflict is inevitable in social interaction and that conflict can have positive functions;

B. expects that citizens, teachers and students will be active in attempting to influence the administration's decision-making;

C. recognizes that power and authority, cultural values and beliefs are the main areas in which conflicts tend to arise;

D. is aware that positive feedback to those who come to the administration in conflict may significantly reduce the incidence of escalated conflict;

E. is sensitive to the issues that underlie a specific conflict and knows which school and community groups may be quick to take sides in that conflict;

F. realizes that information and facts about a conflict situation need to be quickly and widely disseminated;

G. is able to involve other groups and individuals as third parties in assisting in the amelioration of some conflict situations.

Many other implications can be drawn from the foregoing presentation on the nature of conflict.

For the reader who wishes to enlarge on the knowledge base presented here, an annotated bibliography of works dealing with various aspects of conflict is included at the end of this booklet. It is suggested that groups of administrators come together to examine and study the works listed in the bibliography. The sharing and relating of impressions, learnings and feelings between administrators will provide even greater benefits from the study.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Coleman, J. S. **Community Conflict.** Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957.

Coleman produced this monograph from an examination of three kinds of research: (1) studies of communities under stress or in conflict, (2) research on social organizations and social processes and (3) psychological research about the behavior of individuals under various conditions. He has developed a "portrait of the processes" which are set in motion as controversy develops.

The chapter "Factors Affecting the Course of Controversy" presents many concepts and ideas about interventions for changing the course of controversy to positive, constructive directions.

Coser, L. A. **The Functions of Social Conflict.** New York: The Free Press, 1956.

The introductory chapter in this volume is of special value for anyone who wishes to increase his understanding about the nature of conflict. Coser discusses the neglect in the study of conflict by sociologists, the emphasis upon statics rather than upon the dynamics of conflict, and an orientation to stresses and strains rather than on sociological theory which may be more fruitful for application to conflict situations. In the remainder of the book Coser develops fifteen propositions based upon Georg Simmel's essay on the positive functions of conflict.

Deutsch, M. "Toward An Understanding of Conflict," **International Journal of Group Tensions,** 1:1, 1971, pp. 42-54.

A social psychological approach to conflict is presented in this article. Conflict is defined in clear, easy-to-understand terms, as are four examples of what conflict arises from.

Deutsch also stresses that the issue is not how to eliminate or prevent conflict, but rather how to make it productive, or at least, how to prevent it from being destructive.

. "Conflicts: Productive and Destructive," **Journal of Social Issues,** 24:1, 1969, pp. 7-41.

The characteristics of productive and destructive conflict and the conditions which give rise to one or another type are discussed. Also, the differences in types of processes by which the outcomes are derived are presented.

Sections on Productive Conflict, Cooperative Problem Solving and Changing the Course of Conflict contain many useful concepts that administrators may apply in dealing with conflict.

Flannick, N. A. "Administrative Responses To Race-Related Incidents in Selected Urban Secondary Schools." (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1973).

Flannick did an intensive study of long term disruptive incidents in several high schools in one large city. He ascertained the conditions that existed, the initiating incidents, the patterns of development, and the efforts exerted by the school administration to deal with those conflicts. In addition, he examined his data in relationship to several theories and propositions in the literature about conflict.

Lipham, J. M. **Performance Criteria For Principals: Concepts and Instruments.** Columbus, Ohio: University Council for Educational Administration (in press).

Chapter IV of this volume deals with decision-making as a central responsibility of the principal. A model of the decision-making process is presented. It is in the competing alternatives frame of the model that Lipham emphasizes that in most situations the decision-maker is faced with conflict.

McNeil, E. B. **The Nature of Human Conflict.** Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965.

McNeil, a psychologist, has edited this book of contributions on the nature of human conflict by several social scientists. His chapter on Science and Conflict provide a valuable context from which to view conflict.

Part Two of the book contains chapters from each of the social sciences. The chapter by Robert C. Angell is of exceptional value for developing a kind of conceptual map for understanding the nature of conflict.